SMITH Mayor.

Jovis xii° *die Februarii* 1685. *Annoq;*
Regis JACOBI Secundi Angl.
&c. Primo.

THis Court doth desire Doctor *Goodman* to Print his Sermon Preached at *Guild-Hall*-Chapel, on Sunday the 25th. of *January* last before the Lord Mayor, and Aldermen of this City.

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A

SERMON

PREACHED

Before the Right Honourable

THE

LORD MAYOR

And the COURT of

ALDERMEN,

AT

GUILD-HALL Chappel

On the XXV. of *January*, 1684.

By *Jo. GOODMAN*, D. D.

LONDON,

Printed by *J. Richardson* for *R. Royston*, Bookseller to His Sacred Majesty, MDCLXXXV.

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To the Right Honourable

Sir *JAMES SMITH*, Kt.

LORD MAYOR

OF THE

CITY of *LONDON*,

AND TO

The Right Worſhipful the

COURT

OF

ALDERMEN.

My Lord,

IN obedience to your Order I here preſent you the Sermon I lately Preached before you. It had come ſomewhat ſooner to your hands, but that a mighty Revolution

in the Government of theſe Kingdoms happened in the mean while, which for ſome time put a ſtop almoſt to all things but our Prayers: When it pleaſed the Almighty King of kings, to call away from us to himſelf, our Late Gracious Soveraign. The ſtroke was ſo ſudden, and the caſe ſo great, that I ſuppoſe it could not but take up the Thoughts and Affect the Spirits of all good Men. But now that it hath pleaſed the ſame Almighty Power, not only peaceably to ſettle our preſent Gracious Soveraign King James *the Second upon the Throne of his Anceſtors, but alſo to put it into His Royal Breaſt, to aſſure us of the Continuance of all thoſe Bleſſings which we enjoyed under His Majeſties Brother, of the maintenance of the ſame Laws and Government both in Church and State, and that he will continue to Protect and Defend the Church of* England: *all our Hearts are at eaſe, and*

our

our Sorrow is turned into Joy. And now I preſume your Lordſhip, and all thoſe worthy Perſons who aſſiſt your Lordſhip in the Government of this great and famous City, are ſomewhat at leiſure to peruſe this ſmall diſcourſe. I am apt to hope alſo that this Sermon may now in ſome meaſure attain the end I aimed at, which was to eſtabliſh the minds of all our Proteſtant Fellow-Subjects in that excellent Religion we profeſſe, and to provoke us to Zeal and Piety in the purſuance of it. Which that it will pleaſe Almighty God to grant, with a long and proſperous Raign to His Majeſty, and that you My Lord and all the worthy Magiſtrates of this City may enjoy all Happineſs in this World, and Eternal Life hereafter is the hearty Prayer of

My Lord,

Your Lordſhips Moſt

Humble and Faithful Servant,

JO. GOODMAN.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

Before the Right Honourable

THE

LORD MAYOR, &c.

January the 25th. 1684.

Micah iv. v.

For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

THat this Chapter contains a Propheſie concerning the glorious times of the Goſpel, is the general opinion of all Chriſtian Interpreters both antient and modern (one only excepted that

I know of.) Nor need we to relye upon the opinions of men herein, for the matter it ſelf plainly ſpeaks it; foraſmuch as not only thoſe words in the firſt verſe *the laſt days* do direct us to ſuch an application of the Propheſie, but eſpecially becauſe here are ſeveral ſuch things foretold in it as have never yet been accompliſht in the times of the Jewiſh Church, and therefore muſt belong to that of the Chriſtians. And amongſt the reſt theſe three are very remarkable,

1. That there ſhall be ſuch a general confluence to the true Religion, and Worſhip of God that the Society of the Church ſhall be full and numerous, verſe 1. and 2. *It ſhall come to paſs in the laſt dayes, that the mountain of the houſe of the Lord ſhall be eſtabliſhed on the top of the mountains, and it ſhall be exalted above the hills, and people ſhall flow unto it. And many Nations ſhall come and ſay, come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the houſe of the God of* Jacob, *and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for the Law ſhall go forth of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem.*

2. That this great and conſpicuous Society of the Church ſhall enjoy Peace and Tranquillity, and neither ſuffer foreign invaſion, nor inteſtine diſtractions. Neither be harraſſed by its enemies

mies abroad, nor torn in pieces by animoſities at home, verſe 3. and 4. *And he ſhall judge among many people and rebuke ſtrong nations afar off, and they ſhall beat their Swords into plowſhares, and their ſpears into pruning hooks: Nation ſhall not liſt up a ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more: But they ſhall ſit every man under his Vine and under his Figtree, and none ſhall make them afraid.*

3. That internal zeal and devotion ſhall accompany all this external Glory and Happineſs. This is expreſt in my Text by an Holy emulation amongſt the members of this great Society, and a noble contention, who ſhall be moſt pious and devout, and a general reſolution taken up by all thoſe of the true Church to outvie all the blind zeal of others under falſe Religions, v. 5. *For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of our God for ever and ever.*

That all theſe three things here Propheſied of would admirably become the Chriſtian Church cannot be doubted. And that the happy concurrence of all theſe is requiſite, to raiſe the ſtate of Chriſtianity to ſuch a condition as may be anſwerable to what ſeveral other Propheſies have given us ground to expect, (ſometime or other) can as little be denied. *Foraſmuch* as without the firſt of theſe, namely, if there be not ſuch a *confluence*

to the Church as that the Society thereof be full and numerous, it can ſcarcely be called Catholick, but that glorious name of a Church looks like ſome petty Sect, and dwindles into a Conventicle. Without the ſecond of theſe, *viz.* unleſs there be *peace and tranquillity as well as numbers* in the Church, there will want the beauty and harmony which that glorious name requires. And laſtly without the third, *viz. unleſs true and fervent piety be in conjunction with both the former*, all that external ſplendor and felicity will be but meer pomp and pageantry, whileſt the Life and Soul of Religion is wanting. But where and when all thoſe three things meet together eventually as they do Prophetically in this context, then muſt needs be glorious times, when the Church can ſcarcely be called Militant, ſince it will be ſo lively an Emblem of that which is Triumphant in Heaven. God grant (if it be his Holy will) that our eyes may be bleſſed with ſo glorious and beautiful a ſpectacle. But in the mean time let us apply our Meditations to the third and laſt of thoſe particulars, which my Text confines me to. *All people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will*, &c.

From which words I make theſe three obſervations.

First,

First, That all Nations and People generally have ſome God and Religion or other.

Secondly, That all thoſe Nations and People that have any God or Religion, do generally alſo expreſs ſome zeal and devotion, ſome deference and regard to the Deity which they acknowledge, i. e. *They walk in the name of their God.*

Thirdly, That it is very natural and reaſonable that the greater the God is, which any people believe in, and the better the Religion is which they are perſwaded of and have imbraced, with ſo much the more ardent zeal and devotion they ſhould treat that God & purſue that Religion: this is the ground of the emulation intimated in my Text, and the motive of that Reſolution which it is propheſied ſhall actuate and inflame the Profeſſors of the true Religion and the Worſhipers of the true God, *q. d. If all nations* (whatſoever God and Religion they have) *will walk in the name of their Gods*, with much more reaſon *will we walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.*

The third and laſt of theſe is that which I principally intend to inſiſt upon, but I will ſpeak ſomething briefly to the two former alſo, and therefore I begin with the

Firſt Obſerv. viz. *That generally all nations and people have ſome God and Religion or other*, this is implied

ed in my Text though not expreſt as the other two are, and the truth of it is atteſted by the obſervations of all Ages, Climates and Countries, foraſmuch as there is hardly any (if any) at all to be found amongſt them utterly deſtitute of all Notion of God and Religion.

And touching this point that I may not either trouble you with the citations of Stories, or detain my ſelf from that which I principally intend, let it ſuffice that the *Roman* Orator who had diligently inquired into this matter, and was a very competent Judge in the caſe, pronounces thus in his Books *de Legibus*. *Nulla gens eſt neq; tam immanſueta, neq; tam fera, quæ non etiamſi ignoret qualem deum habere deceat, tamen habendum ſciat*, q. d. *There is no Nation in the World either ſo ſoft and ſilly, or ſo ſavagely barbarous as to be utterly without any ſenſe or perſwaſion of the being of a God, inſomuch that even thoſe who are either ſo dull or ſo unhappy, as not to be able to frame any proper and decent notion of the Divine Nature, yet cannot be ſo ſtupid and ſenſeleſs as to doubt of his Exiſtence.*

I do not ſay that there never was any one perſon in the World that denied, or disbelieved a God, for we read of two or three profeſt Atheiſts, and perhaps there may be ſome few others, either of ſuch dull and cloudy heads, or of ſuch profligate

gate tempers, that they have either doubted of or defied the Deity. But that which my Text leads me to aſſert is this, that Atheiſm is contrary to the common ſenſe of mankind in general, and that at leaſt it will be very hard if not impoſſible to find any Nation or People that have lived without a God. *For* indeed it ſeems to be inconceivable that ſuch ſhould become a People, or form themſelves into a National Society, in regard there can be no foundation of Order or Polity without a God. For how can that be a People or Nation, that hath no Laws, no Magiſtrates, no Principles of truſt, no obligations of ſubjection and obedience? How ſhall Laws obtain any veneration, or Magiſtrates any Reverence where there is no Deity (nay no Conſcience) to give a ſanction to the one, nor Providence to countenance and protect the other? How can there be any Faith amongſt men, or any principle of intercourſe or commerce, how can there be any difference between right and wrong, any propriety, or any ſecurity of mens Lives or Fortunes, where no God is acknowledged to oblige the Conſciences of Men? for it is apparent that Pacts and Covenants, nay Oathes and all ſuch other things as uſe to be the aſſurances of humanity, and the Bonds of Society, are but meer empty names

and

and of no validity, without a God to call men to account for the violation of them. Whereas therefore ſome late Travellers tell us that they have diſcovered ſome whole Countries that live without any notion of a Deity or Religion, we muſt crave leave either to call in queſtion the ſufficiency of their intelligence, or ſuſpect the credit of their reports in thoſe particulars. Or elſe we muſt conclude ſome of the race of mankind to be ſo ſadly forlorn and brutiſh, and abandoned not only of all principles of Virtue and Conſcience, but of Reaſon and Civility too, as that we may juſtly doubt whether to call them Men or no.

But as for a ſort of pretenders to wit, who account it a great argument of extraordinary ſagacity, and the higheſt attainment of ſhrewdneſs, to be above the awe of any Divinity, and to be able to laugh at the notion of Religion; it were eaſie to ſhew that they are as void of all manly underſtanding as they are of Virtue, and that they are beſotted by their own ſenſuality and rendred incapable of coherent diſcourſe, and as ſuch men are the peſt and bane of humane Society, ſo they ought to be the ſcorn of mankind.

But ſo much for that, I come to my ſecond obſervation.

Second

Second Obſerv. That all thoſe Nations and People that have any belief of a God, have alſo ſome devotion, and pay ſome remarkable Reverence towards the Deity. This is expreſly aſſerted in my Text, all Nations and People that have a God, however different their apprehenſions of him may be amongſt themſelves, yet they all agree in this, they honour and worſhip him in ſome proportion to the notion they have of him, *i. e. they walk in the name of their God.*

And the reaſon of this is very evident, for the very Nature and Notion of God, is ſo vaſtly great and concerning, that it cannot ordinarily miſſe of affecting ſuch men with the greateſt ſeriouſneſs and regard. For whoſoever thinks of a God, thinks of him as a wonderfully great and Supream Majeſty fit to be feared and adored, and he that frames a Notion of a being that he may dally and trifle with, or eſpecially that he may abuſe and affront at his pleaſure, frames no Notion of God, or thinks not of God at all.

I confeſs notwithſtanding that Man as he is a Free Agent, and whoſe will is at liberty to overbear his judgment, may (if he pleaſe) *withhold the Truth in unrighteouſneſs*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, he may I ſay ſtifle and debauch his Conſcience, and reſiſt, and contradict the greateſt evidence of his own mind ; and upon this account I muſt ac-

knowledge it not to be utterly impoſſible, that he who in ſome meaſure believes a God, may yet not only be careleſs and indifferent towards him, (that is, be void of all Piety and Devotion) but may alſo be ſcurrilous and profane too. Nevertheleſs it is manifeſt that ſuch a man in ſo doing, doth violence to himſelf as well as to Religion, inſomuch that it would be not only more manly and rational, but more eaſie for him flatly to deny a God, and become downright Atheiſt, then to acknowledge him and to affront him at the ſame time, or in a word, to contradict his own principles by his practiſe. I remember a Grave and Learned Heathen (*Plutarch* by name) diſcourſes to this purpoſe; *I had rather* (ſaith he) *be buried in perpetual oblivion, and that men ſhould ſay there was never any ſuch man as* Plutarch *in the World, then that they ſhould remember me under an ill Character, or treat me with ſcorn and deſpight.* So queſtionleſs it would be leſs provocation to the Divine Majeſty that men ſhould utterly deny his Exiſtence, and baniſh all Notion of him, then acknowledge his being, and in the mean while abuſe him to his face. And indeed though we obſerve commonly, that the very worſt of men are ſomewhat ſhy of owning themſelves to be profeſt Atheiſts, yet whenſoever we ſee in them a contumelious carriage towards God and Religion, we have too great

great cauſe to ſuſpect that flat Atheiſm lies at the bottom, when profaneneſs floats at top, and that nothing but baſe-ſpiritedneſs and cowardize tempts them, rather to balk and contradict their principles then to own them. For let a man have never ſo crude and imperfect apprehenſions of a God, yet if he own him at all, he muſt acknowledge him to be (as the firſt ſo) the moſt perfect and excellent of Beings, and upon thoſe very principles even *Epicurus* himſelf will tell him, that reverence, admiration and praiſe is due to him.

But if a man improve ſo far as that he arrive at the acknowledgement of the true God, and have any ripe Notions of him; he then apprehends a mighty Majeſty, inveſted with Infinite Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice and Goodneſs, he conſiders God then as one that upholds him every moment, that doth him good every day, and can deſtroy him when he pleaſes, a God that ſees his actions, obſerves his carriage, a Being too great to be deſpiſed, and too terrible to be affronted, and if all this be not ſufficient to oblige ſuch a man diligently to ſerve God and become Religious, yet ſure it will reſtrain him from outrage and blaſphemy towards him. And indeed he that can think of ſuch a God without a Religious reverence, or treat him baſely, muſt have either ſomething below an humane folly, or beyond an hu-

mane hardineſs, nay indeed he ſeems (in the latter reſpect) to be a pitch above the Devils themſelves; for St. *James* hath told us *they believe and tremble*, *Jam.* 2. 19.

And ſo much alſo briefly for my ſecond Obſervation: I come to my

Third and laſt Obſerv. That the greater the God, and the truer the Religion, the more ought to be the devotion. Or that it is Natural and Reaſonable that the clearer and more perfect Notions any Men or People have of God, and by how much the more reaſonable and excellent the Religion is which they have imbraced, by ſo much the more ardent and remarkable ought to be their zeal and devotion, *If all nations that have a God walk in the name of their God, then it is fit that we walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.* I do not ſay that in the iſſue and event of things, it happens always thus, for it is the ſhame of mankind, and the unhappineſs of the World that we oftentimes find by experience, that the beſt principles prove ineffectual, and the nobleſt Religion is too often diſhonoured by the moſt ſcandalous practiſes. But that which I obſerve, and am now concerned to make good is only, that it is moſt genuine, natural and reaſonable, that the beſt Religion ſhould be attended with the greateſt devotion, and the moſt Holy Lives. And the reaſon of this

this Doctrine will eaſily be made out by this ſhort frame of diſcourſe. *It is* the priviledge of our Natures that we are neither like Machines moved by external force and impulſe, nor yet like the brute Creatures carried away by the meer impreſſions of ſenſible objects, but we are moved from within, are governed by principles of our own, we deliberate of our way, and chooſe our own courſe, and are guided by the free light of reaſon, and the conviction of our Judgments.

And this is the great reaſon of all polite Education in Learning and Study, which is not deſigned meerly to imploy and take up ſo much of our time,or to fill our heads with abundance of impertinent Stories, or to furniſh us with endleſs talk and diſcourſe, but to better our underſtanding, to inlarge the proſpect of our minds, to furniſh us with noble objects of Contemplation,and in a word, to improve our judgments, and direct our choiceand proſecutions. Accordingly whenſoever we would raiſe any man to ſome noble and generous enterprize, we know no more potent ſcrew or pully,nor make uſe of any more effectual method, then to convince his judgment of the excellency of the deſign, to fill him with glorious hopes, and ſo to impregnate his mind with great and worthy reſolutions. For as we obſerve in Nature that Water will riſe as high as its

Foun-

Fountain but no higher, ſo it is alſo in morality, a mans practiſe will eaſily anſwer to the elevation of his principles, but it is as unnatural to contradict them or fall below them, as it is impoſſible to go above or beyond them: conſequently as on the one hand, it cannot be a regular nor manly devotion that goes beyond our knowledg, ſo on the other hand it is as well to be falſe and treacherous towards our ſelves, as to be diſingenuous towards God, to fall below our knowledg of him in performances, and that is not only a very inſignificant knowledge that draws not after it a proportionable devotion, but thoſe are very contemptible men, and ſcarcely to be called men, whoſe principles are not ſeen in their practices.

This is agreeable to the Doctrine of our Saviour, *Mat.* 6. 22, 23. *The light of the body is the eye, if therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs, if therefore the light which is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs*, as if he had ſaid, "What the eye is to the body, that is the reaſon "of our mind to our elections and proſecutions; "and as the one governs our outward man, ſo "doth the other the inward; and as he is a moſt "abſurd man that having eyes in his Head, will "ſhut them and run headlong upon any danger, "ſo is he no leſs, that having a mind rightly in-

"ſtructed,

"ſtructed, will ſuffer himſelf perverſly to be car-
"ried blindfold by the torrent of his Paſſions.
"When ever a mans mind is well principled, he
"is in a fair way to an happy concluſion, for in
"that caſe it is the ſame madneſs and folly for a
"man to run Riot meerly upon the prerogative
"of his will, as for a man in the day light, and
"with his eyes open to daſh his Head againſt a
"Poſt; but indeed *if the light that is in a man be dark-*
"*neſs, i. e.* if his principles be falſe and corrupt,
"then it is no wonder if all run to ruine: For
"though it is in the power of a wilful man to be
"worſe then his principles, yet it is not eaſie (if
"poſſible) for any man to be better then thoſe are.
Again *Mat.* 12. 33. The ſame our Saviour diſ-
courſes to a like effect, *Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or elſe make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit, i. e.* "As
"the Fruit and Productions of Plants follow the
"nature of the Sap in the Roots of thoſe Trees
"reſpectively, ſo naturally do the actions of mens
"lives anſwer the principles of their Minds: A
"naughty Heart will be ſure to produce a wicked
"Life, and it is regular and reaſonable that a
"good Religion ſhould bring forth good devo-
tion.

This is the meaning, and this is the evidence of my third and laſt Obſervation. But now to bring

bring this home to all our Conſciences, and that we may all be perſwaded to come up to this reſolution, and put in practice the Holy emulation in my Text, theſe two things remain to be done.

Firſt, that I demonſtrate the excellency of our principles, and how much the Religion which we profeſs is better then any other.

Secondly, That in conſequence hereof, I ſhew wherein our Zeal, and Virtue, and Piety ſhould equal and outgo thoſe of all other Religions.

1. As for the former of theſe I take it for granted, that all that hear me are not only Chriſtians, but Proteſtants, and of the Church of *England*: and if I ſhould go about at large to ſhew how much (upon that account) we have the advantage not only of Pagans, and Turks, and Jews, but of all other Sects of Religion, perhaps I may do a thing grateful enough, but it would take up more time to do it as it deſerves, then can now well be allowed, however I will crave leave to repreſent theſe Four things.

1. *The Antiquity of our Religion.*

2. *The Credibility and Eaſineſs of its Belief.*

3. *The Gravity and Decency of its Rituals.*

4. *Its Efficaciousneſs to make men generouſly Good and Holy.*

Firſt, *Our Religion is the moſt Antient, and therefore the Beſt and Trueſt.* It was the counſel of Almighty

ty God by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *chap. 6. ver. 16. Stand ye in the ways and ſee and ask for the old pathes, where is the good way and walk therein, and ye ſhall find reſt for your ſouls*, where we ſee the *old way*, the *good way*, and that wherein men may *find reſt to their Souls* is one and the ſame. Agreeably whereunto *Tully* reports to us in his ſecond Book *de Legibus*, that when the People of *Athens* were under great diſtractions in this affair of Religion, they conſulted the Oracle, " By what Rites or in what " form of Religion they ſhould beſt recommend " themſelves to the Divine favour, and the Ora- " cle gave them this Anſwer, That they ſhould " Worſhip God in the moſt Antient manner; " but this not ſufficiently reſolving them, for ſee- " ing the Cuſtomes and Rites of their Country " had been often changed, they were in diſpute " which were the moſt Antient Formes, they " therefore applied themſelves to the Oracle a ſe- " cond time to determine them which was the " moſt Antient Religion, and received this Reply, " That the Beſt Religion was the moſt Antient.

And certainly Truth hath as much the Seniority of Error and Superſtition, as God is before the Devil, eſpecially in Religion; which if it be true and acceptable with him, muſt proceed from him, and then the Antienter it is, the nearer it is to the Fountain of Truth. Beſides, it muſt needs be a

great ſatisfaction to the mind of a ſollicitous man, when he ſhall be able to obſerve that the Religion he imbraces is not of yeſterday or a mere Novelty, which perhaps after Times may diſcover Flaws in, though it paſſes Current for the preſent, but when he ſees it is plainly ſuch as hath endured the Teſt of many Ages. And upon this account (by the way) I verily aſſure my ſelf we have leſs reaſon to doubt of the Truth of Chriſtianity now in the preſent Ages, than thoſe had who lived in the very days of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, and who were Eye-witneſſes of the Miracles wrought for the Confirmation of it, in regard it was poſſible that then men might have ſtood off with ſome colour of reaſon upon pretence of the Novelty of the Religion, and of the proofs of it too. For men might ſay, though we ſee nothing that can be objected againſt theſe things at preſent, yet *dies diem docet*, after times may diſcover the impoſture; but now when that Doctrine and thoſe proofs have ſtood the Shock of ſo many Ages, and if 1700 years together cannot diſcover the leaſt Flaw or Defect in the Evidences of its Divinity, we have as great aſſurance as can be deſired.

But now that our Chriſtian Religion in the general is indeed the moſt Antient Religion in the World, (and leaſt if we derived it no higher than our Saviour, the Pagans, and eſpecially the *Jews*, ſhould

ſhould pretend to greater Antiquity on the behalf of their Religions) the Apoſtle St. *Paul* hath aſſured us that our Religion for Subſtance was long before the Law, for thus he argues, *Gal.* 3. 16, 17. *Now to Abraham and to his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not unto ſeeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt. And this I ſay, that the Covenant which was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot diſanul it*, &c. " In which words a-" mongſt other things the Apoſtle plainly inti-" mates, that the main lines of our Religion were " drawn long before the Law of *Moſes*, and in-" deed that Chriſtianity was for ſubſtance the ſame " with the Patriarchal Religion, and ſo unqueſti-" onably the moſt Antient of all.

Conformable hereunto were many excellent ſayings and diſcourſes of the Fathers, and Antient Chriſtian Writers, particularly *Epiphanius in panario lib.* 1. *cap.* 1. *Auguſt. Ep.* 49. *Greg. Nazian. in Orat. de Maccabæis. Euſeb. Demonſtr. Evang. lib.* 1. *cap.* 5. *& Hiſtor. Eccleſ. lib.* 1. *cap.* 1. *&c.* which whoſo pleaſes may peruſe at Leiſure.

And for our Proteſtant Religion in particular, that that for the Subſtance of it (and bateing only the name) is as antient as Chriſtianity it ſelf, is apparent by this, *viz.* that it derives it ſelf wholly from the Holy Scripture, and the four firſt Gene-

ral Councils, than which nothing can be Antienter that concerns the inſtitutions of our Saviour; whereas all other Sects (for whatſoever they have contrary to us) take their Pedigree from the Doctrine and uſage of ſome later and darker times.

There are indeed thoſe that object to us, where was your Religion before *Luther*? who have been often and ſubſtantially anſwered: And we may much more juſtly Challenge the ſame men to give us an account (if they can) where was the Title of *Univerſal Biſhop* till the time of *Boniface* about 600 after our Saviour? where was their Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation till the *Lateran* Council about 12 or 13 Hundred years after Chriſt? where was the Sacrament of the Lords Supper confined to one of the Elements, and the People reſtrained the uſe of the Cup till the Council of *Conſtance* between the years of our Lord 14 and 15 hundred? and in ſhort, where was their Purgatory and moſt of the reſt of that traſh which we have purged out and they diſtinguiſh themſelves from us by, till the Council of *Trent*? which is indeed the proper Source of their Religion. *But* as for our Doctrine we received it from the fountain of Truth, Divine Revelation, expounded (as I ſaid) by the firſt Councils and moſt Antient Fathers. The Rituals of our Church we received from the Cuſtom and uſage of the Eldeſt

Times

Times and Pureſt Churches: *And* for the form of Government in this Church, we received it from the inſtitution of the Apoſtles in all thoſe famous Churches that were planted by them. *So that* we have all the ſubſtantial Evidences of Antiquity on our ſide, and our Adverſaries muſt take the Novelty to themſelves. And though by our Reformation we ſwept away the Duſt and Rubbidge which Time and the buſie Wits of Men had covered the face of things withal, yet can we no more be charged with innovation or bringing in a new Religion, than our Saviour could be ſaid to deſtroy the Law or the Prophets when he vindicated them from the corrupt Gloſſes of the Scribes and Phariſees, or to have erected a new Temple when he caſt the Buyers and Sellers out of it.

Secondly, *As our Religion is the moſt truly Antient, ſo it is alſo the moſt Credible in it ſelf and moſt eaſie of Belief; and therefore ought to have the more powerful influence upon our Conſciences.* It is not a Maxime with us *Credendum eſt quia impoſſibile*, nor do we think that a man muſt lay aſide his underſtanding and ceaſe to be a man when he becomes a Chriſtian or a Proteſtant. We have in this Church no Contradictions to Reaſon, nor to our Senſes impoſed upon us, nor do we lie under any violent Temptation to be Atheiſts and believe nothing at all by being required

required to believe impoſſibilities. For in the firſt place we have no Monſter of Tranſubſtantiation amongſt us, which if a man believes, he believes that which he can confute with his Fingers ends, and by the Teſtimony of almoſt all his Senſes, and he that can believe upon theſe Terms may believe what he will, ſince nothing more difficult can offer it ſelf to his Aſſent. Nor have we any Doctrine of fatal Neceſſity, which would be a flat contradiction to all the means of Grace, a fatal check to all virtuous endeavours, and conſequently deſtructive to all the ends of Religion. But all the points of our Belief are either ſuch as agree to the reaſon of our Minds when that is exerted and improved, or when any thing is required to be believed which is above our reaſon (it is yet both not contrary to Reaſon and alſo) we are ſo plainly aſſured of it by the authority of Divine and Infallible Wiſdom and Truth, that we have all the reaſon in the world to believe it. Foraſmuch as our Reaſon acknowledges that our Minds are not a Standard for Divine Reaſon, but that may be true which we cannot give a reaſon of. Therefore we have mighty obligations upon us to be zealous and hearty in our Religion, and it would be an intolerable ſhame for us not to *abound in the work of the Lord*, ſeeing our Minds are ſo clearly ſatisfied of the truth of our Principles.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *All the rituals of our Religion are Grave, Decent and Eaſie. Such as we have no reaſon either to be aſhamed to own, or to complain of the burden and difficulty in complying with them.* The Rites of Paganiſme were many of them ſo lewd and obſcene, that a modeſt man ſhould be aſhamed to behold them,and ſome of them ſo cruel and bloody that a man muſt put off not only good Nature, but even almoſt Humanity it ſelf to be able to take delight in them. The Rites of *Judaiſme* were ſome of them ſcarce ſeemly, as that of Circumciſion,others of them very nice and unaccountable;and all together ſo very numerous and difficult to be obſerved that the Apoſtle, ſaw cauſe to pronounce of that Law, *That it was a yoke which neither they,nor their fathers were able to bear*, Act. 15. 10.

And as for the Rites of Chriſtian Churches, ſome of them are ſo redundant in empty Ceremonies, that they are in danger to juſtle out the ſubſtance, and grow ſo troubleſome thereby, as that St. *Auſtin* in his Epiſtle to *Januarius* complains the burden of them was no leſs intolerable than that of *Judaiſme* ; Others on the contrary are ſo negligent and defective herein, that the dreſs of Religion is ſlovenly and indecent. The former repreſent Religion with ſo much Paint and Pageantry,as if it was only to appear upon the Stage, and had nothing to do in the Hearts and Lives of Men.

Men. The latter are ſo careleſs herein, as that they are guilty of rudeneſs towards God Almighty. But the *Church of England* avoids both extreams, for that the Ceremonies thereby impoſed are very few, nothing but extream ignorance can deny, and that they are grave and decent, every man that is not wonderfully tranſported with prejudice muſt confeſs.

Fourthly and Laſtly, *This Religion and this Church of* England *in particular hath all the advantages of making men good and holy, and hath all the moſt efficacious methods of raiſing and improving the ſtate of the World in general and of every member of it in particular.* This is ſo conſiderable a ſubject that it is pity to paſs it by unconſidered, and yet withal it is ſo copious, that if a man enter upon it he knows not where to conclude: But in ſhort the Doctrine of this Church is a *Doctrine* that teaches men to be Devout towards God, Sober and Temperate in the Conduct of themſelves, and Juſt and Charitable in their Carriage towards other men. A *Doctrine* that tends to make men Holy in their Lives, Comfortable in their Conſciences, and Peaceable in the World. Here is no quirks or diſtinctions to reconcile a vicious Life with hopes of Heaven, no palliative cures for Lewdneſs and Debauchery, no outlets for Knavery no tricks of playing faſt and looſe with God and Men, inſomuch that if a man

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was resolved to be an Hypocrite, he had better be of any Religion than this of the Church of *England.* Again, Here are no Principles of Sedition, no seeds of Rebellion, no squabling between the *Jura Sacerdotis* and *Imperii*, between Civil and Ecclesiastical Government; no such Doctrine as that Dominion is founded in Grace, or that Princes forfeit their Dignities and Estates upon pretence of Heresie; no exemption of any Persons from the Municipal Laws upon the account of peculiar priviledges; no excommunication of Princes, but a Doctrine that makes the best Subjects in the whole World. And Lastly, Here is no Doctrine of Scrupulosity to fill men with Doubts and Fears, and perpetual Complaints; no suspending our Hopes upon secret Decrees of God, or rendering him a captious Deity, but plain Holiness and Happiness are joined together. In short the Doctrine of this Church so farre as it is heartily complied with, is able to make an Heaven upon Earth for Piety, Peace, Charity and Tranquillity, and to bring men assuredly to Heaven after this life.

As for the Prayers of this Church they are Grave and Devout, Plain and Effectual. They are neither so high-strained and Seraphical as to Amuze and Confound those that should join in them, nor so flat and low as to chill their Devotion. They are neither uttered in an unknown Tongue, nor

in phantaſtical Language; neither ſo long and tedious as if men expoſtulated with the Almighty, or would weary him with their Importunities; nor yet ſo ſhort and brief as if they dictated to him what they would have him do; but they are ſuch as very good Men of Old thought no meanlier of than that they were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and to be ſure ſuch as are fit for humble men to preſent to a Great and Holy God. And as for the Sacraments, they are in this Church neither more nor fewer than our Saviour himſelf inſtituted, and thoſe frequently and ſolemnly adminiſtred. But as for the Preaching of this Church, it is fit in Modeſty to leave it to the Judgment of Forreiners, who pronounce it to be the beſt in the World.

Now therefore upon the whole matter I think we may (as we are wont to do) juſtly glory of our Faith, our Principles, our Church and our Religion, and why then ſhould not we be the beſt men in the World too? why ſhould not we not only outgo *Pagans*, *Turks* and *Jews*, but all the ſeveral Sects of Chriſtians alſo. We pleaſe our ſelves in pitying poor Infidels and other ignorant or deluded wretches which have not the advantages which we enjoy, but what will all our Prerogatives avail us, if we be not ſo much better than any of the fore-mentioned Perſons, as God hath dealt

dealt better with us? But this brings me to the ſecond thing I propounded, and with which I will conclude, namely by way of inference from the Premiſſes to ſhew what manner of Perſons we ought to be, and how to outvie the reſt of the World.

And here I will confine my ſelf to two Branches.

1. *It is plainly Conſequential of what hath been diſcourſed under this Obſervation, that we ought to be more ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in our Religion than other People are.*

2. *That we ought to outſtrip them in good Life, in Zeal and Fervency, as much as we do in our Principles and Advantages.*

Firſt, *That we ought to be ſo much more ſtable and ſetled in our Religion than others are in theirs, foraſmuch as we have better Grounds for it. Let us walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever*, that is, Let us not ſtagger and faulter, and be *toſſed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine*, for we know what and whom we have believed. It is true we ought not to be ſtubborn and obſtinate in our Opinion, nor peremptory and dogmatical in every punctilio, as if it was impoſſible for us to be one jot wiſer than we are; yet on the other ſide we ought not to be ſeekers, when we have *already found the Pearl of great Price: Quid opus eſt inquiſitione poſt Jeſum Chriſtum, aut curioſitate poſt Evangelium*, ſaid

Tertullian, there is no cauſe to be Sceptical and unreſolved in our Principles, wavering and unſetled in our Minds, ſince we have a Religion revealed from Heaven by the Son of God himſelf, confirmed by innumerable and unqueſtionable Miracles, ſealed with the blood of Millions of Martyrs, and confirmed by 16 or 17 Hundred Years experience.

A Pagan would be ſtedfaſt in his blind Superſtition, for which he knows no better reaſon than the Laws of his Country, or Tradition from his fore-Fathers, and which perhaps at laſt reſolved it ſelf into no better Original than poetical Fiction, or at beſt, reaſon of State: *Jerem.* 2. 10. The Prophet upbraids the *Jews* after this manner, *Paſs over the Iſles of Chittim and ſee, ſend unto Kedar and conſider diligently if there be ſuch a thing, Hath any Nation changed their Gods (which yet are no Gods) but my people have changed their Glory for that which doth not profit*: And then exclaims, *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye Heavens, at this ſaith, the Lord.*

And for this very People of the *Jews*, how ſhamefully, light, and inconſtant ſoever they were in their former days, and howſoever ridiculous they were in their fondneſs towards Novelty and Pagan Superſtitions, yet after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, when they had throughly ſeen the folly and madneſs of Idolatry, as well as ſmar-

ſmarted for their former wantonneſs, they now grow to ſuch an utter abhorrence of Idols, that they were guilty of Superſtition of another kind, and whatever other ſins they lived in, they abominated Idolatry in the higheſt degree, and were not only exceedingly ſtaunch and firm to the true God, but exceedingly ſhie and ſuſpicious of ſome very innocent inſtitutions, leaſt they ſhould in the leaſt border upon Idolatry, or preface to an innovation? And ſhall we have a mind to return to a *Babyloniſh* Slavery again? Nay, ſhall we who have taſted the Fruits of *Canaan*, long after the Fleſh pots, the Onions, and Garlick of *Ægypt*, rank and fulſom Superſtitions?

We ſee how reſolute and almoſt incurably ſtubborn every poor deluded Sectary is in his Errors and Miſtakes: and ſhall we, who have ſo Excellent, ſo Wiſe, and Holy a Religion; ſhall (I ſay) we only be light and ſceptical, alwaies hunting after Novelties. Let not the words of the Prophet *Elijah* 1 *Kings* 18. 21. be too applicable to us, who upbraids them in this manner, *Why halt ye between two Opinions, if Baal be God, ſerve him, but if the Lord be God, then follow him.* If we conſider the Nature and Conſequence of Religion, it will eaſily appear to be a thing neceſſary to be reſolved of one way or other; and if we conſider the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of Life, it will

will ſeem high time to come to a reſolution in that Point; why then if we have been impoſed upon, and deceived hitherto with a bad Religion, do we not caſt it off, and take up that we will truſt to? but if we have (as certainly we have) the beſt Religion in the World: If our Religion be the moſt Antient, the moſt Credible, the moſt Eaſie, and the moſt Effectual to make us Good and Happy, (as I have ſhew'd,) Why then ſhould we not be *ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; for as much as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord?* But this brings me to my ſecond Inference, *viz.*

2. It is our duty in conſequence of the Premiſſes, not only to be Stable and Reſolved, but to be Zealous and Fervent in our Religion: Not only to ſhew by our Lives and Practice what God and what Religion we are of, which too many fall ſhort in; but that by Eminent Vertue, and Remarkable Piety and Devotion we demonſtrate the Greatneſs of our God, and the Excellency of our Religion, and that we endeavour to outvie all thoſe in Life and Practice, whom we either Pity, or Deſpiſe, or Condemn for their Miſtaken Principles.

What Devotion the Heathen paid to their Gods, witneſs the Numerous and Laborious Rites they obſerved to the Honour of them:

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The ſtately Temples they Erected and Dedicated to them; ſome of which, as that of *Diana* at *Epheſus*, and that of *Eleuſinium* in *Attica* were the Wonders of the World: Witneſs alſo the coſtly Sacrifices they offered to them, ſometimes a whole Hecatomb, or an Hundred Fat Oxen at a time, ſometimes *ver ſacrum*, or the choice of every thing which the Spring produced, beſides the Gold and Frankincenſe, the Gums and Spices, the charge of which laſt alone was ſo great an expence, that in *Tertullian's* time they upbraided the Chriſtians with a cheap Religion, and as if they forſook Idolatry only to ſave charges: particularly *Cyrus* in the Apochryphal Hiſtory of *Bel* and the *Dragon* will needs prove *Bel* to be a God from hence, *viz.* becauſe *he ſpent him every day 12 meaſures of fine flower, forty Sheep, and ſix great Veſſels of Wine.* I muſt needs ſay it was but a ſorry Argument of *Bel's* Divinity, but it was an undoubted Evidence of *Cyrus* his Devotion.

Now ſhall blind Pagans be thus large hearted towards dumb Idols, and we be ſtingy and cloſe-fiſted towards the Living God? Nay, ſhall Idolatry be horribly afraid of being guilty of Sacrilidge, (as we may find they were upon all occaſions) and ſhall thoſe that *abhor Idols* never boggle at it?

A ſordid covetous *Jew* would upon occaſion have

have ſpared a Fat Bullock out of his Stall for a Sacrifice to his God, and ſhall any thing that is called a Chriſtian beſides *Judas*, ſay *cur perditio hæc*? Shall only Chriſtians I ſay be for a cheap and frugal Religion? Eſpecially ſhall we think much to offer up our Brutal Paſſions, or the Incenſe of Devout Prayers, or our Hearts and Affections which put us to no Damage?

To go further, a conſcientious *Mahometan* will go to his Moſche to Prayers thrice in a day, will indure tedious faſtings, and undergo painful Pilgrimages, nay, will not drink one drop of Wine all his life, only becauſe his Quaking Prophet *Mahomet* enjoyned theſe Obſervances, and ſhall Chriſtians ſhrink and ſhuffle at the eaſie Yoke of Chriſt Jeſus?

Again, a *Pythagorean* out of Reverence to the Name of God, and to preſerve himſelf from all poſſibility of Perjury, will not ſwear at all, and will Chriſtians blaſpheme that Holy and Dreadful Name by Oaths and Perjury too?

They of the Church of *Rome* uſe ſuch Deference towards their Church, that they will ſubmit by an implicit Faith, and ſtoop to a blind Obedience, rather than indanger the peace, or infringe the Authority of that Society; and ſhall we who worthily value our ſelves upon the Temper and

Wiſ-

Wiſdom of our Church expreſs no regard, no tenderneſs towards it, but tear all in pieces for every petty Opinion, and idle Caprichio of our private heads? Nay, ſhall others Worſhip a Crucifix with more Devotion, than we do the very Son of God himſelf, now ſitting at the Right Hand of God?

To ſay no more, when every petty Sect amongſt us ſeems wonderfully devout in their way, even to Superſtition, and are inflamed with blind Zeal in their Errors; ſhall we only be luke-warm and indifferent, and not have one ſpark of Holy Zeal in our Devotions? Far be it from us, nay, let us be all life, feel a mighty Paſſion, be in a kind of Extaſie of Holy Affections towards our Great God in the exerciſes of our Holy, and Wiſe, and Excellent Religion.

If we do not thus, we may aſſure our ſelves that it is not all the advantages of our Profeſſion or Principles will ſave us; ſo far from it, that they will ſerve only to upbraid our Folly and Abſurdity, to torment our Conſciences, and to aggravate our Condemnation.

But if contrariwiſe, as we have better Principles, and more Light and Reaſon on our ſide, ſo we have proportionably more ſteadineſs in our Minds, more fervency in our Spirits, more Ho-

lineſs in our Hearts and Lives: Then ſhall our Faith ſupport us in all Diſtreſſes, and our Piety intitle us to the Divine Favour and Bleſſing. Our Religion ſhall be an Honour to us, and be venerable in the eyes of all the World. Then ſhall our Church recover its Numbers, its Peace, and all its Glories, and ſtand the ſhock of all its Adverſaries, as being *built upon a Rock, which the Gates of Hell cannot prevail againſt*; which God grant for his Son Jeſus Chriſt's ſake our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be Everlaſting Glory, *&c.*

FINIS.